

I rely on the Internet as a public platform for free speech, equal opportunity, economic growth and innovation. Without vital Net Neutrality protections, companies like Verizon and Comcast, which have a commercial incentive to limit the free-flowing Web, can decide whether I will have a voice online. These companies should not have the power to determine my fate on the Internet. The Open Internet empowers creativity -- for artists, and indie musicians. The Future of Music Coalition which represents the interests of indie musicians who can distribute their own music thanks to the Internet and not be forced to sign with major labels (who under-pay artists and mistreat customers) supports Net Neutrality as does Americans for the Arts. Digital music stores will still continue to operate but the days of RIAA labels owning musicians thanks to the Open Internet appears to be ending. We need to keep the Net open to empower musicians to be able to reach out to fans. The fact that the ultraconservative and religious Christian Coalition has also endorsed the preservation of Net Neutrality is proof this is not a left versus right issue -- its not a liberal idea -- the Christian Coalition even published an essay for the Conservative Case for Net Neutrality.

After decades of manipulating artists, radio, and music fans, it seems safe to say that death has come to the corporate record labels. Album CD sales have been declining for years and as most online shoppers buy singles when downloading and purchasing music digital music sales aren't making up for the losses RIAA labels are seeing in declining CD sales. However, this is a good thing -- RIAA labels having less money means they have less money to sue peer 2 peer file sharing networks and less money to sue individual file sharers. Suing to save their old business model has just created more enemies for them. Major record labels may make last gasp moves like dramatic online music giveaways (you would think they'd want more people listening to the music they produce but they don't care about market share they care about profits) and getting artists to sign away their merchandise and touring revenues. However the trend of decentralization thanks to the Open Internet towards de-

centralization, self-publishing, and direct artist-fan relationships is simply too strong.

Thanks to the Open Internet indie musicians who could not get discovered on radio thanks to the RIAA's payola (pay for play) scandal to bribe radio stations to play only RIAA label music indie musicians can get discovered on the Net. File sharing is not all bad -- the RIAA, and groups like MPAA and ASCAP might not like it but its good for indie musicians as well as for artists.

The Open Internet also enables commerce and empowers free flow of communication and information online.

Like any public utility (electrical transmission lines, phone service) broadband should be regulated as a common carrier service. The Internet should be seen in the same light as something that benefits the public and the providers shouldn't be able to play favorites. One company shouldn't be allowed to

have its films, music or other content download faster than its rivals.

The FCC must have the power to protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must stand with me and keep the Internet in the hands of the people who use it every day. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers. Critics suggest Net Neutrality represents a government takeover of the Internet and the government wants to regulate Internet content that is furthest though from the truth. I am an individual proponent of the First Amendment in favor of individual free speech and freedom of the press. I frown upon both government and corporate censorship. Net Neutrality was law for many years up till 2005-2006 when the FCC issued an Internet Policy Statement listing Internet freedoms for users but failed to include this rule even -- since then its future has come into doubt -- the fight over Net Neutrality is whether to restore it as law and whether to preserve!

the Open Internet or allow corporations to takeover the Net. Before 2005-2006 Net Neutrality was law and there was no debate whether to keep it or not. Broadband providers were obligated to comply with the law and did so without question. Then the FCC issued its Internet Policy Statement and withheld Net Neutrality rules from the Internet Policy Statement. So while it was law it seems to have been removed from law since then or its future whether it remains in law has come under speculation. As soon as Net Neutrality's future began to appear doubtful companies like AT&T said they would lobby to get it killed and tried to experiment with new business models that were discriminatory.

In 2008 Comcast was found guilty by the FCC of violating Net Neutrality in blocking its high speed Internet users from accessing Bit Torrent. Before the debate over whether to keep Net Neutrality started these companies never tried to mess with the Net and were not allowed to mess with it. They did not try to lobby against it -- it was firmly in place as law. Due to FCC policy mistakes like reclassifying broadband a Title I information service in 2002 and failing to include the nondiscrimination rule in the 2005 Internet Policy Statement -- an unwillingness to regulate broadband providers -- the FCC seemed disinterested to protecting consumers and promoting competition -- they allowed harmful, anti competitive and anti consumer mega mergers and the combined companies expressed interest in messing with Net Neutrality. Comcast has tried to say if they messed with the Internet access of its users its users would just switch to another provider in protest. In a competitive market!

t that might be possible but in today's duopoly market too much control is concentrated in the hands of a few big cable and telecom companies that want to mess with Net Neutrality. If one ISP tries to discriminate and you want to switch to another ISP who won't the ISP you switch to if your able to switch would also likely seek to discriminate.

As the Obama Administration and the FCC seek to implement The National Broadband Plan with the goal of universal access keep in mind that open access is more inviting than closed access. An Open Internet will empower greater public participation and be more interactive and inviting than a closed Internet where big corporations control the Internet and can over-charge us based on what websites we visit. Also the federal grants and loans provided under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act to expand broadband deployment are positive but unless the market for high speed Internet access becomes more competitive, open and affordable getting broadband adoption in the U.S. to increase higher will be more difficult. So ARRA funding to rebuild infrastructure -- make repairs to roads, bridges and invest in transportation infrastructure as well as 21st century communications networks like broadband is good but the ARRA funding to expand broadband deployment alone won't be enough to !

increase adoption. To increase adoption we need to have better public policies in place that encourage competition, affordable pricing, and have open access. If the Chairman and other Commissioners are not up to the task of protecting consumers and are willing to bow to the interests of big corporate interests under pressure they should not have accepted their jobs working at the FCC. So if Chairman Genachowski is willing to stand up to industry and do what is right that's great if not step down from your position and President Obama should hire someone else who will protect consumers.

Also the FCC should not be having closed door meetings with big cable and telecommunications companies over these issues. Every time a new technological medium with the power to give a voice to the voiceless in this country developed there was a great moment of hope. We saw it when radio was invented in the 1920s, television in the 1950s, and cable television in the 1980s. Each time media moguls send their lobbyists to Washington to co-op and monetize these technologies before they get off the ground. Each time the public's best efforts to reclaim the media was sacrificed to corporate power. Now we are left with the Internet which represents the future of all media. The future by the way will be open or closed depending on whether government allows corporations to takeover the Net or keeps it open for the public. The future of the media does not belong to AT&T, to Verizon Communications, Comcast, Clear Channel, Time Warner Cable, Rupert Murdoch or his News Corp., or to Micro!

soft, Apple, or any tech or telecommunications company. The future of the media belongs to all of us. The public -- U.S. citizens in general -- every citizen across this country and we need to reclaim the future of the media by reclaiming the Internet a public utility.

Every American should be able to have equal, affordable, open, universal and affordable access to the Net if they want to have it. Regardless of whether your rich or poor, you live in urban or rural areas -- regardless of income -- no fast lanes for the rich and slow lanes for everyone else. By the

way one of the reasons journalism is today in a crisis is due to mismanagement and bad policies --- bad business decisions by conglomerate media giants owning newsrooms. Consolidation and higher concentration in the news media in the hands of fewer companies has led to less diversity, less localism -- less local news and reporting, that is less quality and investigative journalism -- in a more competitive, open market with more choices and higher diversity though we'd have better quality reporting and news. Now journalism is not a commodity product/service - reporting news may have become a commodity by the conglomerates but journalism isn't. The crisis in journalism is both an e!

conomic and political issue. The Open Internet is the last great democratic medium we have left with which blogging, and citizen journalism is now possible. In order to remain globally competitive with the rest of the world we need to have open universal access to the Net.

Its ironic that big cable and telecom companies did not learn the lessons of the failure in the publishing and journalism industry due to consolidation and mismanagement -- discontinuing Net Neutrality could kill the Open Internet and the Net as we know it. It could become a closed medium -- and even more of a privilege than it is today thanks to failed Bush era FCC policies. High speed Internet access should be a right for all Americans. In order to succeed in the 21st Century economy increasingly more people need to have access to the Internet to find jobs, to communicate and share information quickly and effectively in new ways. An Open Internet spurs competition -- if we allow Internet in U.S. to become closed we'll fall further behind other countries with more competitive high speed Internet access markets that retain open access especially those enacting policies to encourage open, universal access.